

IN London and Washington there is a buzz of speculation about the choice of the next American Ambassador to this country—Mr. Winthrop Aldrich is sure to retire after the next election. If President Eisenhower is re-elected the two favourites in the diplomatic betting books are Mr. John Hay Whitney, the banker, and Mrs. Clare Luce, the American Ambassador in Rome.

If length of experience in handling affairs of State is the deciding factor, the dazzling Mrs. Luce will come to



Mrs. Clare Luce.

Grosvenor Square. As journalist, author, Congresswoman, Senator, political hostess, orator and wife of Mr. Henry Luce, she has made a substantial impact on the American political scene.

As Senator Symington, one of her political opponents, remarked: "When Clare acts like a woman, she's better than most women; and when she acts like a man she's better than most men." In Rome her diplomatic career has been as controversial as it is vigorous—with a markedly high rate of change among her Embassy staff. She has not run away from argument or publicity.

On to Diplomacy

Jock Whitney has made a more devious approach to the threshold of diplomacy. At school he toyed with the idea of a career on the stage—he once appeared as a Roman soldier in Shaw's "Caesar and Cleopatra"—and when studying at Oxford he wrote a sketch for the revue "Shake Your Feet."

With Oxford behind and the family fortune in his pockets young Jock Whitney added to his family's considerable reputation in racing circles before dabbling in Hollywood finance—he is said to have been the first man to see the cinematic possibilities of "Gone With the Wind."

The war hastened his metamorphosis into a substantial man of affairs, but it is hardly surprising that President Eisenhower was ready, at first, to write him off as a reformed playboy. Now all is changed. The President has formed the

highest opinion of Jock Whitney's talents and judgment, and he is the most likely candidate for America's most important diplomatic post.

Diamonds are Forever

WHEN Princess Margaret visits East Africa in the autumn I expect that she will pay a flying visit to Tanganyika's Mwandani diamond mine. The owner, John Williamson, has given the Queen a 544 carat pink diamond, the largest of its type in the world.

Sixteen years ago Dr. Williamson, who has a Ph.D. from McGill University, was literally penniless. He was then a slim, intense, young Canadian geologist who had left an excellent job with De Beers in South Africa to test his theory that a rich pipe of diamonds lay under the East African plain. Six years, and all his capital, went into the search. Then he found his diamonds at a place that had recently been visited by a Government surveyor and written off as worthless.

This isolated mine is now Tanganyika's largest single commercial enterprise—£3 million worth of diamonds were shipped last year—and despite the most stringent precautions some experts believe that nearly 30 per cent. of the potential output is stolen by the workers and smuggled out of the country.

Memorable Decade

ONE of the brightest of our theatrical prospects this summer is the visit of the Jean-Louis Barrault-Madeleine Renaud company, which had such a tumultuous success in London in 1951.

This company last night completed its tenth and last season at the Théâtre Marigny in Paris. (Next season it moves to the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt, and opens with an adaptation of "Moll Flanders.") Those who despair of private initiative in the theatre may like to know that the Barrault-Renaud company, which opened with "Hamlet" in 1946 and has since been consistently the top thing of its kind in the world, was launched with the founders' personal savings (£1,500 in all) and has never found, or solicited, a backer, whether private or public.

Durer, sans se vendre is Barrault's motto, and he has lived up to it.

Frustrated Flying

SIR ARCHIBALD HOPE is a man of enterprise and optimism who is used to working in cramped quarters. During the last war he squeezed his tall body into the small cockpit of a Hurricane—he commanded the air escort that protected

Winston Churchill on his last flight to Paris in 1940—and in recent years he has fought hard against the narrow restrictions that limit the activities of Britain's private air companies.

It has too often been a frustrating battle and now he is retiring as joint managing

director of Airwork Ltd. where he pioneered the introduction of the highly popular Colonial Coach Services. "We provide the cheapest service while using the most uneconomic planes."

Sir Archibald is staying on as chairman of the British Independent Air Transport Association—which is pressing for the relaxation of restrictions on the private companies—and he is still a fervent critic of our nationalised air corporations. "I believe that they are grossly inefficient," he tells me.

Sir Archibald has one painless tip for B.O.A.C. "We

have found on the Colonial Coach Services that 84 per cent. of our customers prefer overnight stops to direct flight, on long-distance routes." A good, slow, sedate service to Australia and South Africa might well prove unexpectedly popular.

while serving in Trinidad some twenty-five years ago. On visits to the mainland he came across the "bonded-serf system" of South America; and Mr. Greenidge still believes that Latin America holds more real slaves than any other part of the world outside the Iron Curtain. "There are eight million of them in Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru," he tells me; but at the moment his principal concern is Saudi Arabia.

Breaking the Bank

ONCE events at Monte Carlo have obscured the fact that it is just a hundred years since the Casino was first opened; Sir Winston Churchill's successful visit of last Tuesday may, however, be construed as an informal commemoration.

The Casino was not always successful. (There was a week in March, 1897, when it had only one client, and even he took money off the owners.) But since the 1870s it has attracted the gamblers of the world—to such an extent, in fact, that the card-index of undesirables now numbers over 100,000 names. Proven cheats come at the top of this list: and those who, like myself, enjoy reading about the great deceivers of the past, (Dravero le Nicols, for instance, the Deaf Baron, the Belgian with the Atrophied Finger, and the Diminutive Ancient with his Arsenal of Elastic Bands) will be glad to hear that the tradition is not yet extinct.

Clothes Notwithstanding

As recently as February of this year a trio of emigrants from Las Vegas (a Korean, to be precise, a Lebanese, and an American) took a large sum off the Casino proprietors at the newly-installed crap-tables. This they did by using dice made to the Monte Carlo measure by an ingenious craftsman in Chicago.

I was relieved to learn from "Paris-Match" that although the iniquitous trio had taken the precaution of getting themselves rigged out by "the best tailor in London" they were arrested within an hour of leaving the Casino. In their luggage were found 192 pairs of loaded dice, two imitation diamonds, and a letter from Tokyo inviting them to set up a clandestine crap-game in Japan.

Slave Debate

ON Thursday last Mr. C. W. Greenidge, a retired Colonial Civil Servant, left his gloomy, cluttered office near Victoria Station and sailed to New York in the Queen Mary. As director of the British Anti-Slavery Society—the most active body of its sort in the world—he will play a leading part in the United Nations debate on slavery which will start later this month.

Mr. Greenidge's interest in slavery was first stimulated

tempting of all, a hen has been taught to play the lute.

During the last ten years the oil royalties pumped into Arabia have raised slave prices by nearly 500 per cent. On the Mecca market a young girl now costs £200 to £400, with £150 offered and taken for able-bodied men.

It is probable that the Economic and Social Council of the U.N. will pass a suitable condemnatory resolution, but Mr. Greenidge is in no danger of working himself out of a job.

Successful Co-Existence

A RUSSIAN export which would be sure of an unqualified welcome here is the Grand Circus of Moscow, which has just begun its Paris season at the Palais des Sports.

Its attractions include not only the clown Oleg Popov (formerly a "Pravda" compositor) who has already claimed a place in circus-history, but a galaxy of acrobats, wire-dancers, equestrians and human rockets.

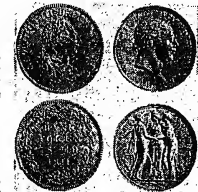
The Russian bear is there in force; but the turns which will most interest me are those in which "kindness and loving persuasion" have reversed the normal order of nature. A tiger, for instance, is said to delight in cold baths, a rabbit to conduct an extended flirtation with a boa-constrictor, and, most

tempting of all, a hen has been taught to play the lute.

Back to the Dollar

THE five-and-sixpenny piece, or English dollar, is a coin that I have often wished to have in my pocket. Should it ever be revived, I hope that the design may have the neo-classical distinction of the two George III models which I reproduce here.

They come from the collection of the late Herbert Whitely of Palgrave which is to be auctioned at Glendinning's next Wednesday and Thursday. Mr. Whitely was not only a coin-



fancier of high standing but an eccentric in the grandest English tradition. A recluse by nature, and the proprietor of the Palgrave Zoological and Botanical Gardens, he devoted his immense knowledge of birds, animals, fish and plants to one main object: the devising, by skilful cross-breeding, of blue specimens of animals and birds. I am afraid that, without a colour-supplement, I cannot show the degree of his success.

Memo. to Dr. Hill

LETTERS addressed: from this country to Malta take, as a rule, forty-eight to seventy-two hours to reach their destination. I hear, however, that those who direct their letters to "Malta G.C." may pay a high price for their courtesy. Letters so addressed sometimes take as long as two months.

Why? Because they are routed via the Gold Coast.